

Full Council – 18 November 2024

1st Labour Group Motion

Brent Twinning with Nablus

This Council notes:

- That Brent currently has a single twinning relationship, that with South Dublin, established in 1997, at a time when Brent had the largest Irish-born population in mainland Britain.
- That Brent currently has the second highest Arab diaspora in England and Wales, within which there is a significant number of residents of Palestinian heritage.
- That like Brent, Nablus in Palestine – as one of the oldest cities in the world – has a long and rich history of culture, diversity and dynamism, ranging from historical architecture, a lively economy and a youthful population.
- That Brent has a long history of internationalism, including conferring on Nelson Mandela the Freedom of the Borough.
- That a growing number of community and charitable organisations, including Brent Trades Union Council, Brent NEU and Brent Friends of Palestine have developed productive relations with Palestinian organisations and diaspora, further strengthening bonds to the city of Nablus.
- That through the joint work of Brent Trades Union Council, Brent NEU and of Brent and Harrow PSC, CADFA and the Palestinian Forum in Britain, opportunities have been provided to young Palestinians to meet Brent young people, Councillors and MPs, and share and develop a bond over their experiences in education, sports and culture. Opportunities for visits to Palestine by young Brent residents are being planned.
- That the establishment of the “Brent-Nablus Twinning Project” organisation provides an opportunity for Brent to explore the potential of a formal twinning arrangement with Nablus through community engagement.
- That community organisations and official representatives in Nablus have shown a desire to develop a more formal arrangement of partnership with Brent and

have communicated this desire with their partners in Brent, leading to this proposal.

This Council believes:

- Twinning enhances bonds and improves relations between communities, creating friendships through what we have in common, as well as learning from other cultures, traditions and experiences.
- Twinning allows avenues for growth through togetherness, improving understanding and ability to tackle issues through collaboration, knowledge and skill shares.
- A successful twinning relationship would promote initiatives like educational collaborations, sports programmes, and heritage preservation workshops, creating long-term connections between residents and institutions and engages with local communities, cultural organisations, and leaders in both twinned regions to support the establishment of the partnership.

This Council resolves to:

- Consider a formal twinning agreement between Brent and the city of Nablus, which sits under the governance of the Palestinian National Authority, and receive a report considering the proposal at a future council meeting.
- Explore immediate steps to foster connections, such as cultural exchange programmes, student and school collaborations, and shared community projects, to create a foundation for future growth.
- Engage with the “Brent-Nablus Twinning Project” organisation to develop a framework for the potential twinning, whilst engaging with local communities, cultural organisations and leaders in both Brent and Nablus to support the establishment of this partnership.

Councillor Ihtesham Afzal
Wembley Hill Ward